

IN THE CLAIMS

We claim:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~A short interfering RNA (siRNA) molecule that down regulates expression of hepatitis B virus (HBV) RNA, wherein said siRNA comprises nucleotide sequence complementary to said HBV RNA or a portion thereof. A chemically modified double stranded short interfering nucleic acid (siNA) molecule comprising a distinct sense strand and an antisense strand wherein:~~
 - a) each strand of said siNA molecule is about 18 to about 27 nucleotides in length;
 - b) the antisense strand of said siNA molecule comprises nucleotide sequence of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides that is complementary to a conserved region of hepatitis B virus (HBV) RNA comprising SEQ ID NO:16208;
 - c) the sense strand is complementary to the antisense strand and further comprises a portion of said HBV nucleotide sequence of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides; and
 - d) about 100% of nucleotides in one or both strands of said siNA are chemically modified.
2. (Currently Amended) The siNA of molecule of claim 1, wherein said ~~siRNA siNA~~ molecule ~~is double stranded~~ comprises one or more ribonucleotides.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Currently Amended) The ~~siRNA siNA~~ molecule of claim 8.1, wherein ~~said 2'-O-alkyl one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said sense strand is-a are~~ 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotide nucleotides.
10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said chemically modified one or more pyrimidine nucleotide nucleotides present in said sense strand is a are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotide pyrimidine nucleotides.
12. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said chemically modified one or more purine nucleotide nucleotides present in said sense strand is a are 2'-deoxy nucleotide purine nucleotides.
13. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said chemically modified nucleotide antisense strand comprises one or more includes a terminal phosphorothioate internucleotide linkages linkage at the 3' end of said antisense strand.
14. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said chemically modified nucleotide one or more purine nucleotides present in the antisense strand comprises is a 2'-O alkyl nucleotide, 2'-deoxy 2'-fluoro nucleotide, 2'-deoxy nucleotide, phosphothioate containing nucleotide, or any combination thereof are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.
15. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said siRNA comprises one or more 2'-O-alkyl and one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotides pyrimidine nucleotides.
16. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 7 1, wherein said siRNA comprises one or more 2'-O-alkyl and one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotides 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.
17. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said siRNA comprises sense strand includes a terminal cap modification moiety at a 5'-end, a 3'-end, or both of the 5' and 3' ends of the sense strand.
18. (Currently Amended) The siRNA siNA molecule of claim 17, wherein said terminal cap modification comprises is an inverted deoxy abasic moiety.
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Cancelled)
21. (Cancelled)
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Cancelled)
24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) The siNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said antisense strand includes a terminal phosphate group.
26. (New) A composition comprising the siNA molecule of claim 1 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
27. (New) The siNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said chemical modification is a phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage, 2'-O-methyl ribonucleotide, 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro ribonucleotide, 2'-deoxy ribonucleotide, universal base nucleotide, 5-C-methyl nucleotide, inverted deoxyabasic or any combination thereof.